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Truman: CIA Off Track

Former President Truman has added his doubts to many others about the operations of the central intelligence agency. And he speaks with authority, for the CIA was organized during his presidency to serve the needs of his office.

As organized, Truman says, the CIA was to bring together intelligence information available to all branches of government, evaluate and interpret it for the president. It was never meant, Truman says, to "be injected into peacetime cloak and dagger operations." It was never meant to make policy.

CIA activities have frequently been embarrassing to this country in the last decade. In numerous instances the agency actually has worked counter to our foreign policy. Certainly we need no agency to work to subvert foreign governments—yet the record indicates that the CIA has done that very thing.

Truman is quick to acknowledge the patriotism and the dedication of CIA officials. He just thinks they have been off the track. The agency, he says, should return to its basic job of gathering and assessing intelligence for the use of the policy makers.

In connection with this, the proposal that the CIA be audited by a special committee of congress, just as the atomic energy commission is, deserves congressional approval. The CIA is too much a law unto itself. For its own good, and the country's, it should be curbed and put under constant check.